



ATF NIBIN Program Hits of the Week

June 16 to July 7, 2003



NIBIN Branch, Firearms Programs Division, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives

Week of 7/7: Ballistics imaging through NIBIN assisted the Boston Police Department in linking the weapon used in the shooting of a 29-year old pregnant woman on the subway, which resulted in the death of her nine-month old fetus, to the victim of a shooting four months later. The 29-year old victim was caught in gunfire resulting from an altercation between several passengers on the subway. One suspect was apprehended, but no weapon was found. Four months later, police responded to a call involving a shooting victim who died at a local hospital. A pistol was recovered from the victim. The pistol was test fired and a match to the ballistic evidence entered into IBIS for the subway shooting was found.

Week of 6/30: A cross-jurisdictional link enabled Illinois law enforcement to strengthen evidence against an accused killer. McDonough County, Illinois, police investigated a homicide at a residence, in which a guest robbed the resident, then fatally shot him with his own gun. Ballistic evidence from the shooting was collected at the scene. When the suspect was later apprehended, he was driving a car that had belonged to the victim. No weapon was recovered; police believed it had been sold or traded for narcotics. Ten months later, Chicago police stopped a vehicle for traffic violations, and discovered that its driver possessed a firearm. The driver told police that he had purchased the firearm on the street, but didn't remember the name of the seller or when the purchase had taken place. Testfire and NIBIN entry of the firearm revealed that it had been used in the murder ten months before. This discovery enabled prosecutors to illustrate the crime using the actual weapon with which it was committed.

Week of 6/23: Imaging bullet evidence has proven a vital asset to the Oakland Police Department, as a recent hit illustrates. Oakland police investigated a homicide, interviewing witnesses and recovering two expended bullets at the scene. The bullets were entered into IBIS at the Oakland Police Department Crime Lab. Three months later, Oakland police served a search warrant on felony burglary charges. The house's resident fled, but police recovered a loaded Smith and Wesson revolver from an open drawer, and transported it back to the crime laboratory for testfiring and IBIS entry. After NIBIN indicated a potential link between the two crimes, a firearms examiner compared the two items and concluded that the projectiles recovered at the homicide had been fired from the seized weapon. The search continues for the gun's possessor, and local and Federal authorities are investigating..

Week of 6/16: As in countless cases before, the New Orleans Police Department has gained valuable leads through NIBIN entry of its crime gun evidence. In a recent case, a suspect was arrested two days after a shooting at a nightclub. Through NIBIN, New Orleans police discovered that one of the guns used in the nightclub shooting had also been used in four additional crimes. No suspects had been identified in the other crimes, which included a homicide and an aggravated battery. Knowledge of the ballistic link now enables police to investigate the potential link between the suspect or his associates and the four crimes.